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ABSTRACT

A National conference was held to examine State policies and practices for helping disabled youth make the school-to-work transition more successfully. The focus of the first day of the conference was on transitional programs currently in existence in Maryland, Michigan, and New York. The first part of the second day's activities involved the summary of three themes in the joint activities of special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation; the themes are: cooperative agreements among special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation; vocational assessment; and referral to vocational rehabilitation. The conference closed with the formulation of recommendations for Federal, State, and local actions at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels with respect to the following issues and areas: career awareness, life goals, staff preparation, coordination, standardization, communication, local implementation, fiscal concerns, employers, comprehensive planning, information dissemination, placement procedures and priorities, and follow-up services. (MN)

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A REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSITION FOR YOUTH WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS TO WORK, COORDINATION OF STATE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

June 11-12, 1984

Albany, New York

A National Conference Sponsored by the New York State Education Department in conjunction with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education with the Support and Assistance of the Northeast Regional Resource Center.

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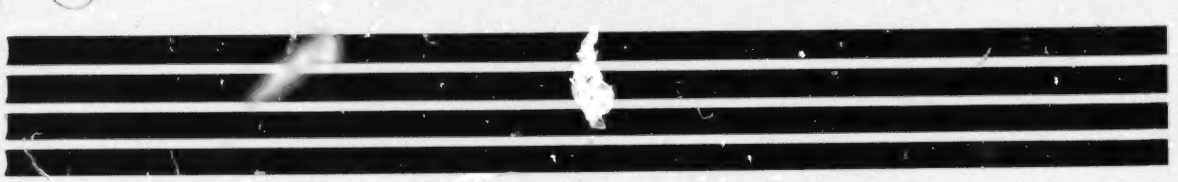

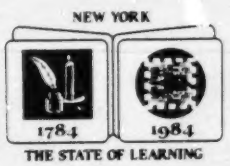

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June 11-12, 1984

Albany, New York

July 1984

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PREFACE

The transition of handicapped youth to work has emerged as a major program focus for Federal, state and local educational agencies in response to a renewed interest by parents of handicapped students, educators, public school and post-secondary school administrators and other agency and labor personnel concerned with the meaningful participation of handicapped youth in post-secondary programs and employment. Specific Federal regulations under P.L. 98-199 have been developed to provide programmatic and fiscal incentives to state and local educational agencies serving handicapped youth to strengthen secondary programs and the necessary connections among special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation to promote a more comprehensive system of transition for these youth. These cooperative efforts are being managed through a variety of administrative and programmatic arrangements in different states and have evolved only in recent years with the impetus of Federal and state legislation for handicapped students. Therefore, while many exemplary programs for assisting handicapped youth in the transition to post-school environments have been developed by states, a continuing need exists to promote dialogue among states on strategies to expand these early efforts through a consideration of new combinations of existing resources and services. As this dialogue occurs, it is critical that the Federal government both guide and support the efforts of states made on behalf of handicapped students.

A National Conference on Transition for Youth With Handicapping Conditions to Work, Coordination of State Policies and Practices, was held June 11-12, 1984 in Albany, New York. The conference represented a significant activity towards achieving a goal to provide a successful system of transition for handicapped youth from school to work. This report highlights and summarizes the information shared by the several states at the conference, describes current state activities, and also recommends actions to the Federal government. The conference report has been structured to serve both as a resource to Federal, state and local educational agencies serving handicapped youth, and as a document to guide the Federal activities in this most important area, in relation to the issues and recommendations of the states.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

State Participation - The following states were represented by the Chief State School Officer, the State Directors of Special Education, Vocational Education, and/or Vocational Rehabilitation or members of their staffs.

Alabama
Alaska
Connecticut
Delaware
Idaho
Iowa
Kentucky
Maine
Maryland
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Nebraska
New Hampshire
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
Utah
Vermont
West Virginia

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education was represented by:

Robert Worthington, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education

Wendy M. Cullar, Director, Office of Special Education Programs

Mike Herrell, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Charlotte Conaway, Education Program Specialist

Richard C. Engelhardt, Regional Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration

Kenneth Baker, Director, Northeast Regional Resource Center

Anne Newton, Northeast Regional Resource Center

The following National Associations were represented by:

Claire Cunningham, Council of Chief State School Officers

James P. Galloway, National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Joseph Owens, Executive Director, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

Other invited guests included:

The Honorable James H. Donovan, Chairman, New York State Senate Committee on Education

The Honorable Laura B. Chodos, Member, New York State Board of Regents

Frances S. Eck, Member, Commissioner's Advisory Panel to the Office of Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions, New York State Education Department

Paul G. Hearne, Member, Commissioner's Advisory Council on Vocational Rehabilitation, New York State Education Department

CONFERENCE AGENDA

MONDAY
June 11, 1984

- Early Arrivals - Optional Tour of Empire State Plaza and Capitol

1:30 p.m. Seville/Barcelona Rooms
- Welcome - Regent Laura Bradley Chodos
- Keynote Address - Gordon M. Ambach
- Experience of States and Issues That Must Be Faced for Coordinated Services
  - New York State Education Department, Cooperative Service Model
  - Michigan State Education Department, Joint Initiatives of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Maryland State Education Department, Joint Initiatives of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation

6:00 p.m. Poolside
- Poolside Reception

7:00 p.m. Poolside
- Welcome and Greetings
  - The Honorable James H. Donovan, New York State Senate and The Honorable Jose Serrano, New York State Assembly
- Dinner Speakers
  - Joseph Owens
    Executive Director
    Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
  - James R. Galloway
    Executive Director
    National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

TUESDAY
June 12, 1984

8:00 a.m. Seville/Barcelona Rooms
- Breakfast

9:00 a.m.
- Transition to Work, Toward a Model (Policies and Practices)
  - Information Exchange Among States
  - Identification of issues concerning the transition of handicapped youth to work at key stages in the educational process.
  - Formulation of recommendations and perspectives on issues of national significance.

12:00 Noon Poolside
- Lunch
  - Luncheon Speaker
    Robert Worthington
    Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education
    U.S. Department of Education
- Summary and Next Steps

3:00 p.m.
- Close
- Late Departures - Optional Tour of Empire State Plaza and Capitol

INTRODUCTION

On June 11-12, 1984, a National Conference on the Transition of Handicapped Youth to Work, Coordination of State Policies and Practices was held in Albany, New York. The conference was sponsored by the New York State Education Department in conjunction with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education with the support and assistance of the Northeast Regional Resource Center. The purpose of the conference was to bring together state level directors from special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation to discuss issues and recommendations concerning the transition of handicapped youth to work. This topic has received national attention during the last year as the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, has established a national priority on this critical area of special education for handicapped students.

In attendance at the conference were individuals from twenty-one states including Chief State School Officers and State Directors of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation. Also attending were representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, national associations, the New York State Legislature, and members of the New York State Education Department Commissioner's Advisory Councils for special education and vocational rehabilitation.

Gordon M. Ambach, New York State Commissioner of Education, welcomed the conference participants and commended them for their successful efforts in the past in providing services to handicapped youth. These efforts have focused mostly on improving educational services provided in elementary and secondary schools. As Commissioner Ambach described, this focus should now be extended to the next phase of need for many handicapped youth: the transition from school to meaningful, productive community life as adults. The needs of this population of handicapped youth include a solid set of basic skills developed in school, vocational competency in skills required for employment, and expanded training opportunities for jobs that will emerge and grow in future years.

The cooperative involvement of educational and rehabilitation professionals, parents and the community is necessary to support this successful transition. In addition, Commissioner Ambach charged the conference participants with the responsibility of providing strong, effective leadership in this important priority.

PART I - HIGHLIGHTS OF STATE ACTIVITIES

A. Presentation of Cooperative Service Models

Several states have initiated joint activities to develop effective transitional services for handicapped youth. In many instances, these joint efforts were an outgrowth of earlier attempts to develop connections among the areas of special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation. During the conference, three of the participating states, Maryland, Michigan and New York, made presentations on their efforts and activities. A summary of those efforts and activities follows:

MARYLAND

Integrated Service Delivery System

Based on a philosophy that all handicapped individuals are entitled to a free, appropriate public education, including vocational education when appropriate, the Maryland State Department of Education's Divisions of Special Education (DSE), Vocational-Technical Education (DVTE), and Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) are committed to develop cooperatively a comprehensive system of vocational education for handicapped students. In 1980, the Maryland State Board of Education approved a cooperative agreement to ensure continued cooperation in the development of programs designed to provide educational services, vocational training and job placement services for the handicapped.

To accomplish these goals, the Divisions work together to: provide services to handicapped persons by assuming primary responsibility to help local education agencies in the development and implementation of vocational programs and services; assure that handicapped persons eligible for services under Federal and State legislation receive them; and to assure that the rights of handicapped persons are protected. In addition, the Divisions mutually plan and develop their respective state plans and require that local school systems follow the same procedure in the planning and development of the local plans for special and vocational education. The delivery of a continuum of appropriate programs and services is further enhanced by clearly enumerated joint and individual responsibilities for the Divisions.

The Division of Special Education (DSE) is primarily responsible for: developing guidelines and providing technical assistance to local school systems to assure that special education students have prerequisite skills prior to being referred to vocational education; assuring that handicapped students have access to appropriate programs based on recommendations of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee; and assuring that services are delivered in keeping with the students Individualized Education Program (IEP). Also, DSE requires local school systems to have vocational education and vocational rehabilitation staff participate in the ARD process and the development of the IEP when vocational education is deemed appropriate. DSE approves funds from P.L. 94-142 for provision of services related to vocational education and requires that projects for Part B funds be developed cooperatively by special education and vocational education personnel, and reviewed and approved by vocational education personnel at the state level. DSE also shares information with DVTE and DVR which it gathers on vocational education services as a result of its monitoring and evaluation procedures.

DSE is responsible for monitoring and evaluating these vocational education services and shares the information with DVR and DVTE. In cooperation with DVTE and DVR, DSE provides in-service and technical assistance to personnel at the local level.

The Division of Vocational-Technical Education (DVTE) is responsible for funding programs for handicapped secondary level special education students in regular or specially designed vocational education programs as well as funding for the support service teams for handicapped students in regular vocational education programs. DVTE requires that all projects involving handicapped students be cooperatively developed and follows the same procedures for review and approval as DSE. DVTE also requires that post-secondary and adult vocational programs for handicapped persons be based on long-range and annual plans and program proposals which are cooperatively developed with vocational rehabilitation personnel.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is responsible for the provision of rehabilitation services for eligible handicapped persons age sixteen and over who have voluntarily withdrawn from school and for whom a referral has been made to DVR by an official of the local education agency. DVR is responsible for the coordination of training and placement services of school-age handicapped persons who have graduated, completed or terminated a public school program, as well as developing policies and procedures which address the provision of vocational rehabilitation services by or during the last year of

school to students who have handicaps which will substantially impede their employment upon completion of the school program. Generally, these students are maintained in the school training program, but carried on the VR caseload.

Vocational Support Service Teams (VSST)

To assist students in overcoming problems that hinder success in regular vocational programs, the State of Maryland established Vocational Support Service Teams. The team is a group of professional educators and paraprofessionals who work together to identify students who are likely to need assistance. Because each educational agency composes its team based on local needs, the composition of the VSST varies. The type and degree of services to be rendered is determined by assessing the needs of the target population. The types of services provided to the students include: vocational assessment, laboratory assistance, instructional program modification and employability skill development.

The VSST is an integral service component of vocational education and the total school experience. It is designed to complement and supplement instruction for vocationally disadvantaged/handicapped students. Vocational evaluation and vocational support are the two components of the VSST concept. Vocational evaluation affords students a starting point from which they can begin to pursue and engage in vocational preparation and training. Vocational support allows students the time, method, and opportunity to enable them to successfully complete vocational training and prepare for effective performance in the labor market.

MICHIGAN

Michigan's first cooperative agreement for coordinating the services of Special Education, Vocational Education and Rehabilitative Services was signed in 1972. The most recent interagency agreement for coordinating services of the three offices was signed in February 1982 and is based on two assumptions: (1) that to provide the handicapped with comprehensive services, more than one discipline must be involved; and (2) there must be local level collaboration or participation. To implement the conditions of the agreement, the Michigan Interagency Delivery System was developed. The cornerstone of the delivery of a continuum of appropriate programs and services to handicapped individuals is the integrated service delivery system which is based upon a mutual commitment and philosophy of placement of handicapped persons in the least restrictive environment. An integral part

of the agreement is also a commitment to the provision of coordinated services that lead to employment for the handicapped. The three Service Areas have developed and disseminated an interagency delivery system model to all public educational agencies and rehabilitation offices which specifies the procedures to cooperatively develop interagency services, the procedures to jointly serve handicapped persons and the types of services that will be available from each agency.

Each Service Area has attempted to provide as many services as possible and to that extent has assigned two staff people (a director and service person) who are responsible for: coordinating the development of the interagency program; providing needed consultation to initiate joint vocational education programs in local, intermediate and post-secondary educational agencies; cooperating in the development of guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the interagency agreement; and planning and implementing ongoing technical assistance for state and local personnel on the implementation of the interagency agreement.

Interagency Responsibilities

The three Service Areas jointly participate in the development and implementation of the following:

A. Mutual consultation in the development of the vocational component needed to implement the IEP for handicapped individuals deemed eligible for services as set forth in the Michigan Interagency Delivery System for Vocational Education and Related Services for the Handicapped.

B. Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) will develop, in concert with appropriate Special Education and/or Vocational Education staff, an Individualized Written Rehabiliation Program (IWRP) for each client or student determined to be eligible for MRS services. The IWRP will reflect appropriate information contained in the student's IEP.

C. All parties to the agreement will exchange information, publications, procedural manuals, and instructions of mutual concern.

The Michigan model is best used as a process model. All the services needed by the handicapped individual are provided. Through these coordination efforts, duplication and overlap of services is avoided. Likewise, all special education students in the special education curriculum leading to a high school diploma are provided with cooperative work experience thereby enhancing their chances for gainful employment.

In the agreement the individual service agency responsibilities are also detailed.

Vocational-Technical Education Services Area (V-TES)

The Vocational-Technical Education Service Area (V-TES) coordinates the fiscal support for Vocational Support Services for those eligible handicapped in regular secondary education programs. V-TES special needs funds may be used to defray the cost of vocational support services for those special education students in adaptive vocational education programs. Determination of individual eligibility for either of the above would be through the Individualized Education Planning Committee (IEPC) process. V-TES also requires that all special needs projects for in-school handicapped persons at the secondary level be reviewed by the intermediate director of special education.

On the post-secondary level V-TES special needs funds can be used to provide vocational support services set forth in the IWRP for those persons in approved post-secondary vocational technical programs. All handicapped persons in a post-secondary program must be provided with an IWRP from the Michigan Office of Rehabilitation Services. The MRS counselor is responsible for notifying the appropriate community college of a student's eligibility for rehabilitation services as well as arranging for any special support services needed for success in the program.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)

MRS has agreed to accept referrals of handicapped students who are at least 15 years old and have completed their pre-vocational program. Students must be eligible for MRS services, be able to benefit from such services now or in the future, and must consider entry into one of the vocational training alternatives. Diagnostic screening and determination of eligibility for MRS services is the responsibility of the rehabilitation counselor.

MRS has also accepted the responsibility for evaluation and provision of rehabilitation services to both eligible handicapped individuals in secondary programs and those handicapped persons who have withdrawn from public school programs. Such services must

supplement the vocational training goals and be directed toward the achievement of a vocational goal with an employment outcome. Services are provided to the extent of availability of fiscal and staff resources based on priorities of selection criteria in effect as required by the MRS State Plan.

Responsibility for coordination and implementation of post-secondary training and placement of all eligible handicapped persons who have completed an approved course of study or graduated from the local public school program has been assumed by MRS.

Special Education Services Area (SESA)

This office assures that special education students in the local districts have access to a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual, whether this be a "Regular Curriculum Leading to a High School Diploma" or a "Special Curriculum Leading to a High School Diploma." A description of either of these curricula plans must be approved by the intermediate school district and included in the annual Intermediate School District (ISD) Plan.

The Special Education Services Area has also assumed responsibility for helping LEA's and ISD's to improve the junior-senior high delivery system for both pre-vocational and vocational education. It has encouraged the initiation of support services for persons in Special Education/Vocational Education as well as vocational evaluation, work therapy and work-study programs developed cooperatively with V-TES and MRS personnel at the local level. Responsibility for establishing criteria and approving Individualized Vocational Training (IVT) programs for funding also rests primarily with the Special Education Services Area.

Michigan's next step is developing a more organized interagency approach to placement. At the state level they are continually reviewing their system, exchanging information on any topic having impact on the handicapped and providing leadership for successful interagency cooperation at the local level.

NEW YORK STATE

In New York State, a model cooperative service delivery plan has been developed which will increase the level of coordination among the Office of Education for Children

with Handicapping Conditions, Office of Occupational and Continuing Education and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation field staff and local school personnel providing services to handicapped students. Some of the key elements in the model include:

Step 1: Identification of Handicapping Conditions

Special Education - Since identification usually occurs at the elementary level, special and regular education personnel are most likely the only staff involved at this early stage. If, however, a student is of secondary age, then occupational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel would also be involved.

Vocational Rehabilitation - It is unlikely that students are identified as handicapped by an OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) before the student is so identified by a teacher, guidance counselor or other educational professional in the elementary school.

Occupational Education - Generally, occupational education personnel are not involved at this first stage, except if the student is entering the system at junior high school age. In that case, a counselor or someone acquainted with the options in occupational education at either the LEA or the Board at Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) counsels the student.

Step 2: Implementation of IEP

Special Education - Career awareness is instituted for handicapped students under 13 years old by special education and regular education personnel. The personnel who provide the career awareness curriculum vary depending on whether the handicapped student is mainstreamed most of the day or receives primary instruction in a special education program. In the first instance, regular education personnel provide the program, and in the second case it is provided by special education personnel. Guidance personnel are also involved early in a handicapped student's program as an additional resource for career awareness and to ensure a smooth transition to the secondary level.

Vocational Rehabilitation - The VRC would not have a direct role in the IEP implementation at that time, but should work with school district personnel to develop career awareness curricula and guidance materials that are appropriate for young handicapped students with varying disabilities.

Occupational Education - In this step it is to the student's benefit to have occupational education personnel involved at two levels. First, someone acquainted with the options available under occupational education should be involved in the development or updating of the IEP at the end of the sixth grade or the beginning of the seventh grade. Second, career awareness courses should be offered to handicapped students. These courses should be taught by persons knowledgeable in the career options available to both special and regular students.

Step 3: Vocational Assessment

At age 14 or earlier, a handicapped student should be provided a vocational assessment by OVR personnel, if deemed appropriate by the local school district Committee on the Handicapped (COH).

The VRC would assess all information to determine:

a) whether the student has a physical or mental disability that would be a substantial handicap to his or her employment;

and

b) whether services, including occupational education, vocational rehabilitation, and support services, would improve the student's employability.

A vocational assessment report, prepared by the OVR counselor and mailed to or presented to the referring COH, includes as a minimum:

a) a description of how the student's disability relates to his or her employment possibilities;
b) vocational strengths and limitations;
c) potential vocational goals including occupational fields;
d) suggested occupational and educational training and support services that would benefit the student in terms of employability; and
e) determination of vocational rehabilitation eligibility.

Students who are determined to be ineligible for VR services would still benefit from the results of the vocational assessment which would be built into their secondary programs by the COH. In addition, these students can be re-referred for VR services if their circumstances change.

Step 4: Occupational Education/Implementation of Joint IEP/IWRP

At this stage, special education, occupational education and vocational rehabilitation staff each have a specific role in providing services to handicapped students. Delineation of service responsibilities is established through SED policy.

Special Education - Special education staff coordinate special education services and manage the IEP.

Occupational Education - The major responsibility for providing instruction for students who can benefit from occupational education is with occupational education personnel, whether or not the student is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

Vocational Rehabilitation - OVR staff provides vocational counseling to handicapped students as well as other rehabilitative services to increase their vocational potential. OVR staff also insure that the IEP/IWRP developed for certain students is available to occupational, special and general education teachers and counselors at both the home school district and BOCES.

As the handicapped student is ready to make the transition from school to work, special education, occupational education and OVR personnel work together to establish follow-up services.

Step 5: Placement, Follow-up

When a handicapped student completes school, drops out or 'ages out' at 21, the vocational assessment referral process essentially is repeated.

Data about the numbers and types of successful job applicants is gathered by OVR personnel and shared with staff of the Offices for Occupational Education and Education of Handicapped Children to guide future program planning.

Records of students who had previously not been interested in or enrolled in occupational education, and who have no specific post-secondary education goals or plans, are referred to OVR. Students who had been enrolled in occupational education also have their school records referred to OVR.

All handicapped students are provided with written information about OVR and its services, so that they can avail themselves of OVR services at a later date, if they choose to do so.

B. Summary of Information Exchange Among States

An analysis of states' joint activities involving special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation is highlighted by three themes:

1) Cooperative Agreements Among Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation;
2) Vocational Assessments; and
3) Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation

The information shared regarding each of these areas is briefly described below:

Cooperative Agreements Among Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation

Several of the states attending the conference indicated that they had established cooperative agreements among the state offices responsible for special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation. Many of these states also described various local agreements which had been developed among these three service delivery systems. Some other states have developed joint task forces to guide program and policy decisions affecting the three program areas.

In each of these instances, positive results were reported with regard to the development of a successful system of transition with the respective states.

Vocational Assessment

The importance of the provision of a vocational assessment to handicapped students was expressed in each of the structured group information exchanges. States have different methods for the delivery of vocational assessments including the following approaches:

- A system of vocational assessment centers in post-secondary institutions.

- o A system of vocational assessment centers located in intermediate educational facilities.

- o A system of mobile assessment units to service large rural areas.

- o A system of shared assessment centers involving special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel.

Participants stated that vocational assessment was a critical aspect of planning for the secondary program for handicapped students. A few states suggested that a second vocational assessment should be conducted when a handicapped student completes the secondary program.

Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation

Information gathered from the states in attendance at the conference indicated that referral to the vocational rehabilitation system might occur according to the following timelines:

- o referral at age 14
- o referral at age 16
- o referral during the final year of the secondary program
- o referral based on the recommendation of the multidisciplinary team

While there was no consensus by states on the appropriate age that handicapped students should be referred to vocational rehabilitation, there was agreement that flexibility should be allowed to allow states to examine a variety of meaningful options.

PART II - ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the information shared by the states attending the conference, it is evident that there are many positive joint activities being coordinated by state agencies responsible for the delivery of special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation services to handicapped students. There are also issues that have emerged as these states attempt to connect large and complex service delivery systems at key points to develop more effective systems of transitioning handicapped students from school to post-secondary programs and employment. The following section presents the issues concerning the transition of handicapped students to work which have been raised at the conference along with the subsequent recommendations to resolve these issues. The issues address four major phases of the transition process: elementary education, secondary education, post-secondary education and employment. The issues and recommendations for each of these phases raise certain implications for cooperative initiatives at the Federal, state and local levels, as identified in the following section of the report.

A. Elementary Education

Issue 1. Career Awareness - a need to introduce handicapped students to the expectations and responsibilities of the world of work at an early age.

Recommendations

1.a. Career education curricula should be developed and introduced early in the elementary school years.

1.b. During elementary school, career awareness curricula should provide broad exposure to a variety of occupational areas rather than specific occupational skill training for a particular job.

1.c. Concentration on basic skills competency should not exclude development of career awareness in elementary-age handicapped students.

1.d. The use of role models for young handicapped students should be encouraged to reduce stereotyping disabled workers in a limited range of occupations such as food service or building maintenance.

1.e. Vocational rehabilitation counselors should assist educators in preparation of career awareness curricula.

Issue 2. Life Goals - a need to consider the relationship of the handicapped youth's educational and vocational goal to his or her other long-range needs in medical, housing, recreational, transportation and community living areas.

Recommendations

2.a. Parents should be well informed and actively involved in the choice of programs to be provided to their handicapped child. This should include parent training and participation in IEP development.

2.b. The school system should be prepared to assist parents in advocating for needed services for their handicapped children in areas related to their education.

2.c. The educational system should encourage parents to develop realistic life goals with their disabled children that will allow the students the maximum opportunity for independent life in the future.

Issue 3. Staff Preparation - a need for working knowledge of handicapping conditions is necessary for professionals involved with students at the elementary level.

Recommendations

3.a. In-service training should be required for all elementary teachers regarding needs of handicapped students.

3.b. Development of training programs should involve special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation.

Elementary Education Implications

Federal Level: Program and fiscal incentives are needed:

-- to encourage the early preparation of handicapped students for employment

-- to provide for the training of elementary staff on the needs and capabilities of handicapped students

-- to promote increased communication and cooperation among special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel at the State and local level.

State Level: Statewide syllabi should be developed to promote career awareness at the elementary level. These syllabi should be jointly developed by the respective State offices of special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation.

Monitoring efforts should include a focus on parent involvement in the IEP process and on the inclusion of long-range goals in the IEP.

State Education Departments should take a leadership role in the development and coordination of in-service training programs designed to provide information on handicapped students to all elementary teachers.

Local Level: Special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel should jointly develop career awareness materials for elementary-age handicapped students. (A local task force of these individuals might be established at the district level to coordinate this effort.)

Parents should be made aware of the importance and relevance of long-range planning for post-school living through active involvement in the IEP process.

In-service training programs should be developed to provide all elementary teachers with information and skills in working with handicapped students.

B. Secondary Education

Issue 1. Coordination - the need for systematic cooperation among those individuals involved in meeting the educational, vocational and life-goal needs of handicapped youth.

Recommendations

1.a. The development of a handicapped student's educational and vocational rehabilitation plans should be closely coordinated and should actively involve the student, his or her parents, the special education teacher, the occupational education teacher, and the VR counselor.

1.b. A continuum of services model should be developed that assists the student from the appropriate time of assessment, through his or her educational years, onto post-secondary training or placement in a job. This will reduce the drop-out rate among handicapped students and will improve their employment opportunities.

1.c. Vocational education programs should be encouraged and made more accessible to handicapped students. Special educators and VR counselors should assist in developing or modifying appropriate vocational education programs for disabled students.

Issue 2. Standardization - a need to develop a common base that will support the separate but coordinated missions of the special education, vocational education and VR programs as they mutually serve students with handicapping conditions.

Recommendations

2.a. The eligibility criteria for special education and VR should be the same so that no student falls through the cracks.

2.b. The right to rehabilitation services after completion of school should be recognized and authorized through legislation.

2.c. Standard definitions for handicapping conditions and services should be established among the special education and vocational rehabilitation systems.

2.d. The role and responsibilities of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation should be defined in regulation at the Federal level.

2.e. Federal guidelines for coordination procedures should be provided.

2.f. The data bases required for Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation management should be coordinated and analyzed to support the transition process.

2.g. The appropriate age for assessing the handicapped student's vocational needs and for referring the student to VR should be early enough to allow for adequate planning in the secondary years. Determination of the age for assessment and VR involvement should be individualized based on the student's individual needs.

Issue 3. Communication - a need to share information among Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation program personnel and also with other agencies serving handicapped persons.

Recommendations

3.a. Specific program details should be shared at all levels of program involvement - Federal, State and local district levels.

3.b. A cycle of joint information exchange conferences should be established to update staff on program changes.

3.c. All public and private agencies that play a part in the transition of handicapped youth from school to work should share knowledge about the services they can provide and their appropriate role in the transition process. This can be accomplished by involving these agencies in planning councils.

Issue 4. Local Implementation - a need to implement Federal and state policies for transition in the local school district.

Recommendations

4.a. Local cooperative agreements should be enacted to guide school districts and VR offices in appropriate coordinated efforts.

4.b. More efficient monitoring and evaluation of local programs through a team approach should be conducted to identify successful exemplary service delivery approaches.

Issue 5. Fiscal Concerns - a need to appropriate sufficient funds to implement the priority activity of transition.

Recommendations

5.a. Federal funding for transition activities should be appropriated on a formula basis rather than through highly competitive discretionary funds. All handicapped students have transition service needs and Federal funding should be uniformly available to meet these needs.

5.b. Incentives should be established to broaden access for handicapped students to vocational education programs.

5.c. The responsibility for financing particular services, including support services, should be clearly defined at the Federal and state levels.

5.d. Joint funding of some service projects and training should be encouraged.

5.e. Discretionary funds should be available to develop and demonstrate innovative approaches to transition.

Issue 6. Preparation of Staff - a need for sufficient, well-trained staff at the local level to implement the school-to-work transition process for handicapped students.

Recommendations

6.a. Pre-service training for special education teachers, vocational education teachers and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors should require training and competency in the other respective program areas before certification to practice.

6.b. In-service training of practicing professionals should keep pace with changing programs and processes and should be required rather than offered on a voluntary basis.

6.c. A full-time coordinator position should be committed to work with local agencies to plan and implement transition programs.

6.d. A network of vocational and technical tutors should be developed for extra remedial training in a vocational area that a handicapped student may require.

Issue 7. Employers - a need to involve employers and business and industry representatives in the planning, coordination and implementation of education and rehabilitation programs to prepare handicapped students for the world of work.

Recommendations

7.a. Areas of vocational assessment should measure skills, aptitudes and interests related to actual job clusters; they should be occupation oriented.

7.b. Employers should be involved in defining the vocational training programs for students to ensure that curricula match the prerequisite skills for entry into occupations in demand.

7.c. Nontraditional use of private business for supported-work sites should be encouraged for both youth and adults with disabilities.

7.d. Work experience while in school will improve the handicapped student's access to employment opportunities.

Secondary Education Implications

Federal Level: Special projects and model transition systems which demonstrate effective connections among special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation should be encouraged.

A review should be conducted of definitions and program and fiscal guidelines of the Federal Departments of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation to determine if real or potential conflicts exist.

Appropriate alignment of Federal guidelines among the three respective Federal Departments, should be considered in relation to the impact on State programs and services.

A practical resource handbook containing the Federal guidelines of the respective Departments of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation might be developed for use by State agencies.

Federal incentives should be provided to encourage increased levels

of cooperation among special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation at the State and local levels. The special needs of handicapped youth should be advocated for, and be adequately represented in, any legislation enacted for training in employment or related areas in order to setaside sufficient resources for this group.

State Level: The State Offices of Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation should establish policies to encourage the joint development of IEPs and IWRPs.

Uniform definitions among special education and vocational rehabilitation should be developed to facilitate the transition process.

Model programs should be established and field tested to determine exemplary practices for connecting the special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation systems move effectively at the local level.

Employers should be involved in State-level advisory groups to guide program and policy decisions and provide relevant job market information.

Local Level: Special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel should coordinate the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Individual Written Rehabilitation Programs (IWRPs).

Handicapped students should be provided a vocational assessment and access to the full range of vocational education programs.

Staff should be designated to coordinate the joint activities of special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation. Local program administrators should involve employers in curriculum and planning efforts at the secondary level.

C. Post-Secondary Education

Issue 1. There is a need for increased coordination of services for handicapped individuals between secondary and post-secondary institutions. (States should take the lead in promoting this articulation).

Recommendations

1.a. Information on secondary handicapped students should be passed onto post-secondary institutions more frequently.

1.b. Appropriate "bridges" should be expanded to reinforce the articulation already in existence.

1.c. Innovative linkages should be established and supported with fiscal incentives.

Issue 2. Comprehensive planning for handicapped students should include access to post-secondary programs for students who are determined to be capable of benefitting from additional education.

Recommendations

2.a. Post-secondary schools should be able to get special education funding in addition to occupational education monies.

2.b. Personnel from all three areas should be involved in comprehensive post-secondary planning for handicapped students. Training should be in new technical areas, not just traditional ones.

2.c. Other possible sources of funding should be looked at for students going on to post-secondary programs. These new monies might provide incentives for post-secondary institutions to offer more in the way of support services needed by handicapped individuals to succeed.

2.d. Transportation needs should be included in any planning for handicapped students participating in post-secondary programs.

Issue 3. Post-secondary institutions should develop more extensive placement procedures for the handicapped.

Recommendations

3.a. Post-secondary institutions should be provided with increased information about what placement services OVR is able to provide.

3.b. Post-secondary schools should be exploring new job market areas in which handicapped individuals might be placed.

3.c. Dialogue between employers and post-secondary schools must focus on current job market needs in relation to the capabilities of handicapped students.

Post-Secondary Education Implications

Federal Level: Incentives should be provided to promote an increased level of communication between local school districts and post-secondary institutions.

Funding might be provided to establish necessary support services for handicapped students attending post-secondary programs.

Model or demonstration projects should be encouraged to develop effective placement services for handicapped students who complete post-secondary programs.

State Level: States should take a leadership role in promoting connections and communication among local school districts and post-secondary institutions.

Training programs should be developed by states for local school districts and post-secondary institutions with a focus on strategies to increase collaboration among these systems to facilitate transition of handicapped students to post-secondary programs.

Local Level: Local school districts should provide all appropriate and relevant educational information regarding handicapped students enrolled in post-secondary programs.

Post-secondary institutions should make available to local school districts information on the accessibility of their programs to handicapped students including any available support services.

D. Employment

Issue 1. Information Dissemination - a need to improve awareness, attitudes and knowledge across agencies as well as among community groups, and business/industry.

Recommendations

1.a. Employers need to be informed about skills of handicapped students. Special education, vocational rehabilitation and vocational education should educate business/industry about capabilities of the handicapped.

2.b. A business/industry unit should be developed within education departments to promote the role of education in economic development.

Issue 2. Placement Procedures and Priorities - a need to develop better coordinated, more innovative and intensified placement practices.

Recommendations

2.a. Placement activities should be coordinated at the local level and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in placement of the handicapped should be identified.

2.b. Local schools should demonstrate greater commitment to placement by assigning and training staff as placement coordinators.

2.c. Entry level skills and the types of jobs appropriate for handicapped students should be identified through involvement of local employers.

2.d. New and innovative technologies which offer non-traditional job opportunities for disabled workers should be explored with large corporations.

2.e. Work with craft committees to develop job leads. Vocational education advisory committees should be involved in developing job leads for handicapped students.

2.f. Tax incentives for firms that hire disabled workers should be increased.

Issue 3. Follow-up Services - a need to provide support services after the student is placed in a job.

Recommendations

3.a. Enter into agreements with employers to continue to work with the handicapped after placement; for example, establish a post-placement team.

3.b. Identify all factors that lead to failure on the job to guide program improvement at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Consider life skills as well as occupational skills in the analysis.

3.c. Continue to provide needed Social Security insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits after job placement.

3.e. Provide lifetime support system for severely disabled individuals by involving appropriate community agencies and resources.

Employment Implications

Federal Level: Federal incentives to employers should be increased to promote employment of handicapped individuals at a level commensurate with their needs and capabilities.

Secondary and post-secondary programs should be encouraged to strengthen their relationships with the employment sector and to involve employers in guiding curriculum and service coordination. Funding should be provided to extend necessary services to handicapped individuals who have been employed.

State Level: The program improvement and curriculum efforts of states should involve representatives of business and industry. States should encourage systematic interaction among local school districts and post-secondary institutions, and employers.

Model programs which demonstrate effective linkages with employment should be supported and demonstrated.

Local Level: Special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel should involve local employers in cooperative program and service efforts. Employers should be involved in guiding curriculum development activities at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Employers should be involved in designing effective placement and follow-up services in local school districts and post-secondary institutions.

PART III - SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The information gathered from the states attending the national conference on the transition for handicapped youth to work, and summarized in this report, represents the beginning of a series of critical activities at the Federal, state and local level. These activities involve strengthening the connections among the systems of special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation to benefit handicapped youth. It is most important at this time when resources are limited, yet increasing demands are placed on all youth, and especially on those youth with handicapping conditions, that Federal, state and local agencies consider new arrangements and combinations of existing resources to assist handicapped youth become productive citizens. As handicapped youth have been integrated into the nation's schools, they similarly must be provided equal participation in the post-school world of work. The challenge for the eighties rests with our continued commitment to allow each disabled individual equal opportunity to contribute to the future growth of our nation.

In order to achieve this goal, states must continue to share effective practices to provide for the transition of handicapped youth to work. This will involve the development and documentation of model programs and service delivery patterns with the gradual establishment of more comprehensive state and local cooperative planning and programming for handicapped youth.

While states must assume a leadership role for the many activities to be coordinated in this area, the Federal government must likewise take specific action to support their efforts. The following items are presented for consideration of the Federal role in assisting states to improve their current status of efforts regarding the transition of handicapped youth to work:

- Review and analyze the issues and recommendations of the states concerning transition for youth with handicapping conditions to work put forward in this report.

- Disseminate this conference report to key state officials and other interested parties for the purpose of guiding future initiatives in this area.

- Develop an on-going system of communication among the states repre sented at the conference, as well as other interested states, to follow-up on the recommendations put forward at this conference.

- Support a similarly organized conference approximately one year from now to allow states an opportunity to provide an update on the progress made to develop effective systems of transition for handicapped youth.

- Develop information resources to be used by states in planning for the transition of handicapped youth to work and increase levels of support for states' efforts in this area.